

## MEDIA AND PROPAGANDA

# Collective memory as a resource in Russian information warfare against Latvia

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**Abstract.** *The paper analyses articles from the Russian language newspaper “Vesti Segodnya”, which are devoted to the war in Ukraine. The paper consists of two parts. The first part of this paper explains how the conceptualization of the information warfare has evolved during the second half of the 20th century and how the term “information warfare” is defined in Russia. Then, by looking at the theoretical foundations of collective memory, it demonstrates how collective memory has been incorporated into news stories to create resonance with current events in Ukraine. It is concluded that the usage of collective memory can be identified in articles devoted to the war in Ukraine to resonate with conflict in eastern Ukraine.*

**Keywords:** *information warfare, collective memory, Ukraine, discourse, political communication.*

## Introduction

“History must be our guide, if only because nothing else is accessible. Unfortunately, the past as it is interpreted by historians provides anything but a reliable compass. The argument either by historical analogy or at the least with illustration by historical anecdote claimed to be pertinent, is the rule, not the exception, in political discourse”, writes Colin Gray.<sup>1</sup> It is true that in journalistic practice a special place has been

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<sup>1</sup> Gray, C., S. (2011). *Hard Power and Soft Power: the Utility of Military Force as an Instrument of Policy in the 21st Century*. Strategic Studies Institute. P. 2.

devoted to historical analogies or commemoration of historical events. And in many cases, officials of different states had used historical events and societies' traumatic past to act on public opinion. In other words, collective memory of various societies can be turned into a political asset for those in power to achieve political goals. This issue has become of particular importance nowadays, when due to the Russian information operations, a large number of people living in Eastern Europe has been influenced by these information operations. Therefore, the aim of this paper is to identify the usage of manipulations of collective memory in the Russian-language newspaper "Vesti Segodnya", which is the only Russian-language daily newspaper in Latvia. To achieve this aim the paper firstly analyzes current theoretical foundations of information warfare and the place for collective memory in the arsenal of information operations. Secondly, the critical discourse analysis approach developed by Norman Fairclough is used to analyse the articles from "Vesti Segodnya". According to this approach, discourse analysis cannot be completed only with the help of textual analysis of publications. Fairclough argues that research process should involve "an analysis of texts as they are embedded within and relate to, social conditions of production and consumptions"<sup>2</sup>. Thus, information provided and interpreted by "Vesti Segodnya" is also analyzed in the context of official Russian Federation documents: 2008 Russian Foreign Policy Concept<sup>3</sup>, the Russian National Security Strategy to 2020 (approved in 2009)<sup>4</sup> and the 2013 Russia's Foreign Policy Concept<sup>5</sup>.

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<sup>2</sup> Fairclough, N. (1989). *Language and power*. London: Longman Group UK Limited. P. vii.

<sup>3</sup> 2008 Russian Foreign Policy Concept. Retrieved from: <http://archive.kremlin.ru/eng/text/docs/2008/07/204750.shtml>

<sup>4</sup> Russian National Security Strategy to 2020 (approved in 2009). Retrieved from: <http://rustrans.wikidot.com/russia-s-national-security-strategy-to-2020>

<sup>5</sup> 2013 Russia's Foreign Policy Concept. Retrieved from: [http://archive.mid.ru//brp\\_4.nsf/0/76389FEC168189ED44257B2E0039B16D](http://archive.mid.ru//brp_4.nsf/0/76389FEC168189ED44257B2E0039B16D)

## Conceptualisation of information warfare

The history of information warfare and information operations have a very long past. Nevertheless, information warfare conceptualisations, which would correspond to contemporary circumstances, first emerged in the 1980s. Then, the United States Department of Defence acknowledged the growing impact of information and communication technologies on national security in its defence strategies<sup>6</sup>. Martin Libicki is considered as one of the first authors who provided classification of information warfare strategies, which would correspond to contemporary circumstances. M. Libicki acknowledges the difficulties that come with the conceptualisation of the term information warfare. One can see legions of hackers uncovering the vulnerabilities of opponents' computer systems that might be exploited by hordes of viruses, worms, logic bombs, or Trojan horses as information warfare. At the same, time information warfare can be defined as psychological manipulation through media.<sup>7</sup>

M. Libicki offers information warfare definition, which is developed by Thomas Rona. According to it, "information warfare is the strategic, operation, and tactical level competitions across the spectrum of peace, crisis, crisis escalation, conflict war, war termination, and reconstitution/restoration, waged between competitors, adversaries or enemies using information means to achieve their objectives".<sup>8</sup> Nevertheless, for M. Libicki information warfare, as a separate technique of waging war, does not exist. He considers information warfare as "conflicts that involve the protection, manipulation, degradation and denial of information".<sup>9</sup> M. Libicki argues that there are several distinct forms of information warfare, each laying claim to the larger concept. These seven forms are:

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<sup>6</sup> Libicki, M. (1998). *The Future of Information Security*. Washington, DC: National Defense University. P.1-2.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid. P. 4.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid. P. x.

- 1) command-and-control warfare – strikes against the enemy’s “head and neck”; its objective is to decapitate the enemy’s command structure from its body of command forces<sup>10</sup>;
- 2) intelligence-based warfare – consists of the design, protection, and denial of systems that seek sufficient knowledge to dominate the battle space;
- 3) electronic warfare – usage of radio-electronic and cryptographic operational techniques, thus war is waged in the realm of communications<sup>11</sup>;
- 4) psychological warfare – information is used to change the minds of friends, neutrals, and foes; furthermore, M. Libicki divides this form of information warfare into four sub-forms: (a) operations against the national will; (b) operations against opposing commanders; (c) operations against troops; (d) cultural conflict.
- 5) hacker information warfare – attacks are specific to properties of the particular system because the attacks exploit knowable holes in the system’s security structure;
- 6) economic information warfare – blocking information or channelling it to pursue economic dominance;
- 7) cyberwarfare – a grab bag of futuristic scenarios<sup>12</sup>.

As it can be noticed, M. Libicki provided his conceptualisation of information warfare from a strictly military perspective. And since he talks about the information war in terms of military and technological measures, his conceptualisation of information warfare is also highly technological. However, various authors argue that information warfare must also be conceptualised in the “non-military environment”. Patricia Williams, Gary Wheatley, William Hutchinson, Richard Hayes, Kenneth Payne, Peter Pomerantsev, Michael Weiss to name only few write about “deception”, “information manipulation”, “media war”, “perception management”, “communication war”, “weaponisation of

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid. P.9.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid. P. 27.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid. P. 6.

information”, to suggest that the mass media, including Internet, can be used to disseminate propaganda or support deception operations. P. Williams argues that although methods of information operations and the understanding of their military origins has not changed, the manner in which the topics are presented and how these relate to today’s environment and increasingly global society have become a new focus<sup>13</sup>. Already in 1995, Richard Szafranski pointed out that information systems are a comprehensive set of knowledges, beliefs, decision-making process and systems of the adversary. In his work, R. Szafranski especially emphasizes the usage of the word “warfare”, which for him is not synonymous with “war”. “Warfare does not require a declaration of war, nor does it require existence of a condition widely recognized as “a state of war”, argues R. Szafranski<sup>14</sup>. In this sense, warfare can be undertaken by or against state-controlled, state-sponsored or non-state groups.

Former employee of the United States Department of Defence, David Alberts has proposed definition of information warfare, in which he argues that information warfare operations traditionally are aimed at “decision makers, the information and information-based processes they rely on, and their means of communicating their decisions”. According to him, information operations are carried out in the “interaction arenas”, which are not just military, but also economic, political, social and ideological.<sup>15</sup>

Defence analyst Anders Eriksson states that information warfare is presented as “an asymmetric strategy”. In the article “Information Warfare: Hype or Reality?” he offers to analyse information warfare through the theory of network society developed by Manuel Castells. A. Eriksson points out that in the network society military assets are being developed in the light of commercially or publicly available know-

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<sup>13</sup> Williams, P. (2010). *Information Warfare: Time for a redefinition*. Edith Cowan University.

<sup>14</sup> Szafranski, R. (1995). *A Theory of Information Warfare*.

<sup>15</sup> Alberts, D. S. (1996). *Defensive Information Warfare*. Washington, DC: National Defense University.

ledges and technologies. The success of the military, security and defence sectors are guaranteed by a combination of operational activities with technological and industrial innovation. This means that in today's world such high standards can be achieved not only by countries, but also by NGOs. In the network society power elite does not consist only of governments, but also of non-governmental sector.<sup>16</sup>

Furthermore, the US Department of Defence now characterizes information operations as integrated employment of information and communication technologies in concert with other lines of operation to influence, disrupt, corrupt, or usurp the decision making of adversaries and potential adversaries while protecting own information environment. According to this scheme, information environment includes individuals, organisations, and systems that collect, process, disseminate, or act on information. This environment consists of three interrelated dimensions, which continuously interact with individuals, organisations, and systems. These dimensions are known as physical, informational, and cognitive. The physical dimension is composed of command and control systems, key decision makers, and supporting infrastructure that enable individuals and organisations to create effects. The informational dimension specifies where and how information is collected, processed, stored, disseminated, and protected. The cognitive dimension encompasses the minds of those who transmit, receive, and respond to or act on information. As such, this dimension, according to the US Department of Defence, constitutes the most important component of the information environment.<sup>17</sup>

Unlike the works of the US and Western European authors, who had paid great attention to military and technological aspects of information warfare, Russian authors understand information warfare as influencing consciousness of the masses as part of the rivalry between the different civilisational systems adopted by different countries in the information space by the use of special means to control information

<sup>16</sup> Eriksson, E. (1990). *Information Warfare: Hype or Reality?* P. 60.

<sup>17</sup> US Joint Chiefs of Staff (2014). *Information Operation. Joint Publication 3 – 13*. P. I-3.

resources as information weapons.<sup>18</sup> Polish author Jolanta Draczewska points out that Russian information warfare theory has long tradition in Russia. “It is derived directly from special propaganda theory, which was first thought as a separate subject in 1942 at the Military Institute of Foreign Languages”, writes Draczewska.<sup>19</sup>

Igor Panarin (*Игорь Панарин*) who has managed to compose a large number of books and publications on this matter is considered as one of the leading information warfare theorists in Russia. In his works, Panarin is convinced that political establishment in Western countries had been waging information warfare operations against Russia for a long period of time. Panarin also provides an outline of the basic instruments of information warfare. According to Panarin, these sets of instruments that are used in information warfare can be divided into different categories: (a) propaganda, which can be “black”, “grey” and “white”; (b) intelligence or information gathering about the opponent; (c) the analytical component, which consists of media monitoring and current situation analysis; (d) the organisational component, which means coordination and steering channels, secret agents influencing media, which shapes the opinion of politicians and mass media to take the shape desired by the state involved in information warfare; (e) other combined channels, including special operation forces, which carry out different sabotage operations.<sup>20</sup>

At the same time, another leading information warfare strategist from Russia Sergei Rastorguyev (*Сергей Расторгуев*) writes that the information warfare is conducted into “self-learning information systems”. He stresses that information warfare does not align with the concept used nowadays. Many information warfare techniques were already used several thousand years ago, when, according to this author, “self-learning information system” started to develop.

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<sup>18</sup> Draczewska, J. (2014). *The Anatomy of Russian Information Warfare. The Crimean Operation, A Case Study*. Warsaw: Centre for Eastern Studies. P. 12.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid. P. 9.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid. P. 15-16.

According to Rastorguyev, each self-learning information system has a different structure. It can be static, dynamic or self-modifying.<sup>21</sup> In every self-learning information system the key concept is knowledges, and protection of these knowledges is one of the cornerstones of information warfare. “To win an information warfare means to understand which knowledge is useful to obtain, which data can be processed and which – can not”, argues Rastorguyev<sup>22</sup>. This means that informational war is a struggle between different belief systems. According to the theory of this Russian academic, the growing importance of knowledge of different information systems capabilities is dictated by the fact that more and more emphasis is put on “informative weapons” instead of firearms.<sup>23</sup>

### Collective memory as the resource in information warfare

When speaking about collective memory as one of the fundamental instruments in information warfare arsenal, we should start by pointing out that French sociologist Maurice Halbwachs is generally recognized as the founding father of collective memory research. He came up with his definition of collective memory in 1925. In his opinion, collective memory is a function of social power. He is convinced that our memory is influenced by the society. For him there is no such thing as individual memory *per se*, rather individual's memory is pervaded by social framework. Halbwachs described collective memory as “a reconstruction of the past that adapts the image of ancient facts to the beliefs and spiritual needs of the present”<sup>24</sup>.

The concept of “collective memory” rests upon assumption that every social group develops a memory of its past; a memory that emphasizes its uniqueness and allows it to preserve its self-image and pass it on

<sup>21</sup> Расторгуйев, С. П. (1999). *Информационная война*. Москва: Радио и связь. Р. 7.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid. P. 67.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid. P. 6.

<sup>24</sup> Halbwachs, M. (1999). *On Collective Memory*. Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press. P. 38.



to future generations.<sup>25</sup> Collective memory defines relations between the individual and the community to which it belongs and enables the community to bestow meaning upon its existence. Following this basic assertion, we can summarize the main features of the concept of collective memory through five characteristics that illuminate its complexity:

**1. Collective memory is a socio-political construct:** As such, collective memory cannot be considered as evidence of the authenticity of a shared past, rather, collective memory is a version of the past, selected to be remembered by a given community (or more precisely by particular agents in it) in order to advance its goals and serve its self-perception. Such memory is defined and negotiated through changing socio-political power circumstances and agendas.

**2. The construction of collective memory is a continuous, multi-directional process:** Current events and beliefs guide our reading of the past, while schemes and frames of reference learned from the past shape our understanding of the present. The process of shaping collective memory is neither linear nor logical, but rather dynamic and contingent.

**3. Collective memory is functional:** Social groups commemorate their past for different purposes, chiefly to define and chart the boundaries of communities, enabling their members to define group membership in contrast to the “other” and to reaffirm the group’s core convictions and inner hierarchy.

**4. Collective memory must be concretized:** Collective memory is a theoretical concept that deals with abstract ideals, but in order for it to become functional, it must be concretized and materialized through physical structures and cultural artefacts such as commemorative rituals, monuments, historical museums, educational systems, the Internet and more.

**5. Collective memory is narrational:** Memory must be structured within a familiar cultural pattern. In most cases, it takes the well-known

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<sup>25</sup> Neiger, M., Meyers, O., Zandberg, E. (eds.) (2011). *On Media Memory. Collective Memory in a New Media Age*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan. P. 4.

narrative form, including a storyline featuring a beginning, a chain of developing events, and an ending, as well as protagonists who are called upon to overcome obstacles and so forth. Moreover, the adoption of a narrative structure enables creators of accounts that address the past to charge these tales with lessons and morals that guide and instruct mnemonic communities in the present.<sup>26</sup>

After Halbwachs, many scholars of various academic disciplines have researched this field. In this paper, particular attention has been paid to those authors who have especially emphasized that manipulation of collective memory had often been used to achieve political goals. Monroe E. Price writes that in many cases, those in power, faced with the opportunity or need for propaganda, use media: (a) to play on memories; (b) to contrast the painful present with a glorious past; (c) to create or reinterpret a past to justify aggressiveness in the present; (d) to change perceptions of the present through manipulation of a sense of history. In this respect, information warfare includes public diplomacy measures, propaganda and psychological campaigns, political and cultural subversion, deception of or interference with local media, infiltration of computer networks and databases and efforts to promote dissident or opposition movements across computer networks<sup>27</sup>. Price points out that collective memory of defining events shapes and sustains national identity. Even in times of peace, states maintain – or even construct – such memories as sources both for shared national identity and for the legitimacy of state power<sup>28</sup>. As an example of such trend in political communication Price uses the case study of Balkan wars during 1990s. In his research, Price concludes that information intervention describes efforts by those in power – an international force or local authority – to use media to shape collective memory of the past so as to influence present and future activity. “Media regulation and exploita-

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<sup>26</sup> Ibid. P.5.

<sup>27</sup> Monroe, P. (2002). *Memory, the media and NATO: information intervention in Bosnia-Herzegovina*. Cambridge University Press. P. 138.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid. P. 139.

tion is commonly used by the controlling group or groups to reinforce its ideal notion of identity and history,” stresses Price, pointing out that in Bosnia-Herzegovina media law was used to establish parameters of what memories could and could not be articulated<sup>29</sup>. Price insists that collective memory of defining events shapes and sustains national identity. Even in times of peace, states maintain – or even construct – such memories as sources both for shared national identity and for the legitimacy of state power.

Although Dan Berkowitz acknowledges that the notion of collective memory directly contradicts the professional journalistic paradigm’s core tenet of objectivity that calls for new occurrences to be treated independently journalism draws on historical memory on a regular basis to add perspective through commemoration, historical analogies, and presentation of historical contexts.<sup>30</sup> “The concept of collective memory is a rich cultural approach for understanding how news comes to be,” writes Berkowitz. This author argues that, in essence, news grows from the values of the society that creates and consumes it. “Those values are delivered through familiar news narratives that help heal during traumas and make the unfamiliar more comfortable. By doing so, collective memory helps connect those timeless stories to a tangible construction of a society’s history, turning new events from something generic to something reflecting that which society holds dear”, concludes Berkowitz<sup>31</sup>, who in his research analysed the way how collective memory has been incorporated into news stories about the shootings at Virginia Tech and the Obama presidential campaign in 2008.

In this regard, also noteworthy is Eric Hobsbawm’s and Terence Ranger’s work “The Invention of Tradition”, where authors demons-

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<sup>29</sup> Ibid. P. 153.

<sup>30</sup> Berkowitz, D. (2011). Telling the Unknown through the Familiar: Collective Memory as Journalistic Device in a Changing Media Environment. In *On Media Memory. Collective Memory in a New Media Age*, M. Neiger, O. Meyers, E. Zandberg (eds.). New York: Palgrave Macmillan. P. 202.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

trate that political authorities can and do invent past that justify their authority. According to these two authors, “invented tradition” is taken to mean a set of practices, normally governed by overtly or tacitly accepted rules and of a ritual or symbolic nature, which seek to inculcate certain values and norms of behaviour by repetition, which automatically implies continuity with the past. “In fact, where possible, they normally attempt to establish continuity with a suitable historic past”, stresses Hobsbawm and Ranger.<sup>32</sup>

Therefore, to summarize those opinions on collective memory, it can be concluded that collective memory can be understood as a multi-directional process of turning a narrative of the past into a functional, socio-political construct. And as notes Jill Edy, professor of communications at the University of Oklahoma,, journalism draws on historical memory on a regular basis to add perspective to information through commemoration, historical analogies, and presentation of historical context<sup>33</sup>.

## Methodology

To achieve the aim of this research, critical discourse analysis is used as the main method. Since the research object is a number of articles that were published in the Russian language newspaper “Vesti Segodnya”, the approach of critical discourse analysis developed by Norman Fairclough was chosen for the analysis. For Fairclough critical discourse analysis (CDA) means the analysis of relationships between concrete language use and the wider social cultural structures. He attributes three dimensions to every discursive event. It is simultaneously text, discursive practice – which also includes the production and interpretation of texts – and social practice. The analysis is conducted according to these three dimensions. N. Fairclough writes: “Language is no autonomous

<sup>32</sup> Hobsbawm, E., Ranger, T. (1983). *The Invention of Tradition*. Cambridge University Press. P. 1.

<sup>33</sup> Berkowitz, D. (2011). *News as Collective Memory. Cultural Meanings of News: A Text-Reader*. London: Sage Publication. P. 301.

construct, simply a system of sentences, but language as discourse, as action; similarly, society is no mosaic of individual existences looked in some stratified structure but a dynamic formation of relationships and practices constituted in large measure by struggles for power; professions not as guilds but as institutions whose conventions are ideologically shaped by such social relationships and realised through such particular discourses”<sup>34</sup>. Textual analysis involves the analysis of the way propositions are structured and the way propositions are combined and sequenced<sup>35</sup>. Analysis of texts covers traditional forms of linguistic analysis – analysis of vocabulary and semantics, the grammar of sentences and smaller units, and the sound system and writing system. But it also includes textual organisation above sentence, including the ways in which sentences are connected together and things like the organisation of truth-taking in interviews or the overall structure of a newspaper article. For Fairclough discourse analysis becomes CDA only in the second stage of the analysis, where the research process involves an analysis of texts as they are embedded within, and relate to, social conditions of production and consumptions<sup>36</sup>. Though Richardson points out that this aspect of CDA remains the most under-developed. Thirdly, Fairclough suggests that a fully rounded critical discourse analysis should involve an analysis of the text’s “socio-cultural practice” or “the social cultural goings-on which the communicative event is part of”. This level of analysis may be at different levels of abstraction from the particular event. It may involve its more immediate situational context, the wider context of institutional practices the event is embedded within, or the yet wider frame of the society and the culture. “For instance, we could ask what does this text say about the society in which it was produced and the society that it was produced for?”, explains Richardson<sup>37</sup>.

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<sup>34</sup> Fairclough, N. (1989). *Language and power*. London: Longman Group UK Limited. P. vii.

<sup>35</sup> Richardson, J. (2007). *Analysing Newspapers. An Approach from Critical Discourse Analysis*. New York: Palgrave MacMillan. P. 38.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid. P. 39.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

What is particularly useful in Fairclough's approach to critical discourse analysis, is that the author puts great emphasis upon "common-sense assumptions" which are implicit in the conventions according to which people interact linguistically, and of which people are generally not consciously aware. Fairclough calls "common-sense assumptions" as "ideologies". And for him "ideologies" are closely linked to both power and language. "The nature of ideological assumptions embedded in particular convention depends on the power relations which underlie the conventions. (...) Ideologies are closely linked to language, because using language is the commonest form of social behaviour, and the form of social behaviour where we rely mostly on "common-sense assumptions", argues Fairclough.<sup>38</sup> On the other hand, Steven Lukes points out the use of the concept of power in the context of social relations means to talk about the agents who operate in groups or organisations, which actively or passively are able to influence thoughts or actions of others. In addition, Michel Foucault in his theory of discourse analysis has paid particular attention to the power relations that are expressed through language and different practices. He writes: "It seems to me that power must be understood in the first instance as the multiplicity of force relations immanent in the sphere in which they operate and which constitute their own organization; as the process which, through ceaseless struggles and confrontations, transforms, strengthens, or reverses them; as the support which these force relations find in one another, thus forming a chain or a system, or on the contrary, the disjunctions and contradictions which isolate them from one another; and lastly, as the strategies in which they take effect, whose general design or institutional crystallization is embodied in the state apparatus, in the formulation of the law, in the various social hegemonies".<sup>39</sup>

The aim of the critical discourse analysis in this research is to demonstrate the incorporation of collective memory into the news stories

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<sup>38</sup> Fairclough, N. (1989). *Language and power*. London: Longman Group UK Limited. P. 2.

<sup>39</sup> Foucault, M. (1978). *History of Sexuality. Volume 1. An Introduction*. New York: Pantheon Books. P. 92-93.

in order to achieve political goals. It is done through analysing 22 articles that were published in the Russian language newspaper in Latvia “Vesti Segodnya” during the year of 2014. These 22 articles were chosen for analysis because they use historical facts and analogies to describe current situation in Ukraine. This research paper analyses publications about the war in Ukraine, however, since the newspaper is published in Latvia, it is obvious that these publications are targeted to the audiences in Latvia and therefore, create circumstances in which collective memory can be identified as the resource in Russian information warfare against Latvia. Although it is necessary to stress that “Vesti Segodnya” provides its readers with a large amount of historical articles, thus promoting the concept of “Russian world”, which are devoted to Russian people who have lived in the territory of Latvia for a long time, this research paper pays particular attention to the examples of how collective memory had been incorporated into news stories about the Ukrainian war, as it is currently undoubtedly the top priority in regional security and in intergovernmental relationships in Europe and Russia. The newspaper “Vesti Segodnya” was chosen for the analysis because it is the only Russian language daily newspaper in Latvia.

The analysis of publications consists of two parts – the textual analysis and discursive analysis of articles. Firstly, during the textual analysis of the “Vesti Segodnya” newspaper, the articles, where current situation in Ukraine is described using analogies to history and where basic historical concepts are used to explain ongoing war in eastern Ukraine, are identified. Secondly, these concepts are analysed according to the social and political events in society and key strategic concepts of the Russian Federation, which are included in the 2007 Russian Foreign Policy Concept, the 2009 Russian State Security Strategy and the 2013 Russia’s Foreign Policy Concept. These documents spell out the following objective in the media domain: “Russia’s main task is to create effective information campaign everywhere, where the real challenges to Russia’s interests have been detected, by maintaining a wide public consensus about the direction of Russia’s Foreign Policy.” Therefore, “Russia will develop its own effective means of information influence

on public opinion abroad, strengthen the role of Russian media in the international information environment providing them with essential state support” and “take necessary measures to counteract information threats to its sovereignty and security”<sup>40</sup>.

The third part of Fairclough’s approach to critical discourse analysis is left aside intentionally, because it takes more information and more data to analyse “the wider frame of the society and the culture”, as Fairclough puts it.<sup>41</sup> However this article is part of a more extensive research, and the third dimension of Fairclough’s approach will be introduced in an upcoming work. Therefore, the design of this analysis consists of two parts:

- 1) identification of usage of historical facts and analogies to describe current situation in Ukraine;
- 2) analysis of these publications regarding Kremlin politics.

### **Textual analysis of articles**

Most of the publications, which were printed in “Vesti Segodnya” and which were analysed in this research, were reprinted from Russian news sites “svpressa.ru” (ten articles), “lenta.ru” (four articles), “gazeta.ru” (two articles) and “pravda.ru” (two articles). And only four articles that were analysed were written by local journalists of “Vesti Segodnya”. These articles were chosen for analysis because they consisted of the most evident usage of historical analogies describing current situation in Ukraine.

In the beginning of 2014, when President of Ukraine Viktor Yanukovich was thrown from power, there were two articles in which ongoing conflict in Ukraine was compared with the situation in Yugoslavia in 1990s. Nevertheless, in most cases in these 22 articles demonstrations in the Maidan square of Kiev were compared with a situation during

<sup>40</sup> 2013 Russia’s Foreign Policy Concept. Retrieved from: [http://archive.mid.ru/brp\\_4.nsf/0/76389FEC168189ED44257B2E0039B16D](http://archive.mid.ru/brp_4.nsf/0/76389FEC168189ED44257B2E0039B16D).

<sup>41</sup> Richardson, J., Burridge, J. (2011). *Analysing Media Discourses*. Routledge, Taylor and Francis Group: London, New York. P. 49.



both the First and Second World War. In the first example demonstrators were characterized as the followers of Ukrainian militarist and political activist Simon Petlura, who fought against Red army and was an ally to former head of Poland, marshal Juzef Pilsudski. In the second example demonstrators were identified as Ukrainian nationalist fighters from Bukovina region. Furthermore, regarding the creation of historical parallels with the times of the Second World War, there were articles – both in the news pages and editorials – where demonstrators against the V. Yanukovych regime were compared with fighters of Ukrainian Insurgent Army that fought against Nazi Germany, Soviet Army and Polish military units during the Second World War. In another case “Vesti Segodny” republished an article from a British newspaper “The Guardian”. Miln who was the author of this article stated that “at the heart of Kiev protest was ultra-nationalists and fascists”<sup>42</sup>.

On September 11, 2014, newspaper “Vesti Segodnya” printed an article, which was previously published in different pro-Kremlin news sites. The article claimed that volunteer battalions in Donbas not only use the fascist runes, but also wear Nazi outfits. Furthermore, this article quotes the British tabloid “The Daily Mail”, stating that Russian forces use similar tactics as Nazi Germany in the operation Barbadosa. However, this evaluation is lost in transition, because Russian language newspaper misinterprets this assessment by saying that British newspaper has acknowledged that Ukrainian army fights like the Nazi. “Vesti Segodnya” writes: “Kiev uses tactic which is similar to that of the fascist “Luftwaffe”. Experts inform about the danger of Obama’s military solution to Ukrainian crisis”. Besides, this article states that “Ukrainian ultra-nationalists now take official positions in state institutions, army and police”<sup>43</sup>.

The article titled “Banderovskij Ordnung” (which can be translated as “Bandaras Order”) that was reprinted from the Russian newsite “svpressa.ru” can be mentioned as another example of collective memory

<sup>42</sup> “Кто в центре украинского кризиса?”, *Vesti Segodnya*. January 31, 2014.

<sup>43</sup> “Каратели гордятся свастиками”, *Vesti Segodnya*. September 11, 2014.

being incorporated into news stories. The author of this article informs that new Ukrainian government is planning “derussification of population” and “severing cultural and historical links with Russian world”. According to author’s sources, “political council of “Right sector”<sup>44</sup> has worked out the plan.

In March 2014, a particular place in the newspaper “Vesti Segodnya” was devoted to the annexation of Ukrainian peninsula Crimea. For example, newspaper’s authors argue that annexation of Crimea helped Putin to strengthen his image as “strong leader, who is ready to defend national interests and submit himself to even unfavourable circumstances”<sup>45</sup>. Besides, as “Vesti Segodnya” mentions, annexation of Crimea made a “good foundation for consolidation of society against the threats of liberals”<sup>46</sup>. But reporting on the so-called independence referendum of Ukrainian peninsula, “Vesti Segodnya” wrote about the “return of strayed Crimea” and “Victory Day in Crimea” (Victory Day is traditionally associated with the celebrations of the end of WWII), and concludes that “Crimea is taken”<sup>47</sup>. Furthermore, the newspaper praises Vladimir Putin who “has made his name in the annals of Russian history”. “After all, no one has joined Russia since 1940,”<sup>48</sup> argues “Vesti Segodnya”, indirectly saying that occupation of the Baltic States was actually a voluntary accession of Baltics into the Soviet Union.

### Discursive analysis of articles

In order to strive to accomplish the first part of Fairclough’s critical discourse analysis, it is necessary to analyse the social conditions of production and consumption of the text. This means to comply with the second dimension of Faircough’s approach to CDA, according to which it is necessary to analyse not only the organisational aspects of

<sup>44</sup> “Бандеровский Ordnung”, *Vesti Segodnya*. September 1, 2014.

<sup>45</sup> “Зачем Путину Крым.” *Vesti Segodnya*. March 4, 2014.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

<sup>47</sup> “Возвращение блудного Крыма.” *Vesti Segodnya*. March 18, 2014.

<sup>48</sup> “День победы в Крыму!” *Vesti Segodnya*. March 19, 2014.

“Vesti Segodnya”, but also the coherence of the content of these media products with the official political course of Russian Federation.

Already in 2013, chief of the General Staff of the Russian Federation, general Valery Gerasimov, stressed in his article, published in the Russian state-funded journal “Voyenno-promyshlenny kuryer”, that “the role of nonmilitary means of achieving political and strategic goals has grown, and, in many cases, they have exceeded the power of force of weapons in their effectiveness”. Furthermore, Gerasimov even speaks about the “military means of a concealed character, including carrying out actions of informational conflict and the actions of special-operation forces”.

Russia has successfully created its “information sphere”, and the borders of this sphere are not the same as geographical borders. In the centre of this “information territory” there is a concept of Russian World, which is spread in the territory of the former Soviet Union. Already in 2001, Vladimir Putin stated: “The notion Russian World has from time immemorial extended far beyond the geographical boundaries of Russia and even far beyond the boundaries of the Russian ethnos. Tens of millions of people speaking, thinking and, perhaps, more important – feeling Russian live outside the Russian Federation.”<sup>49</sup> It is not a secret that these people have become a resource of the Russian foreign policy.

Furthermore, in 2013 Russian Foreign Policy Concept it is stated that Russia “will take necessary measures to ensure national and international information security, prevent political, economic and social threats to the state’s security that emerge in information space”. In this document Russian officials acknowledge that “soft power” is a “comprehensive toolkit for achieving foreign policy objectives building on civil society potential, information, cultural, and other methods and technologies alternative to traditional diplomacy”.<sup>50</sup>

<sup>49</sup> Maliukevičius, N. (2013). (Re)Constructing Russian Soft Power in Post Soviet Region. *Baltic Security&Defence Review*, 15 (2). P. 84.

<sup>50</sup> 2013 Russian Foreign Policy Concept. Retrieved from: [http://archive.mid.ru/bpr\\_4.nsf/0/76389FEC168189ED44257B2E0039B16D](http://archive.mid.ru/bpr_4.nsf/0/76389FEC168189ED44257B2E0039B16D).

Considering newspaper “Vesti Segodnya” as one of the resources for Russian information operations and the fact that the owners of this newspaper are connected to Russian authorities, the articles that are published in this newspaper are part of the Russian information campaigns in Latvia. Besides that, when reporting about events in eastern Ukraine, the editors of “Vesti Segodnya” reprinted articles that were previously published in the news sources close to Kremlin officials. As an example of such trend, publications reprinted from “svpressa.ru”, “pravda.ru”, etc can be mentioned. Thus, Russian-speaking community in Latvia is exposed to official Kremlin lexicon to a large extent. According to it, there are no Russian soldiers on the soil of Ukraine, annexation of the Crimean peninsula is voluntary accession into Russia or “returning to the motherland”, Kiev’s fascists junta attacks civilians living in Donbas region and Donetsk, and Luhansk militias and teroristic gangs are considered as separatists fighting for their freedom from Kiev’s fascists, which in addition are a puppet government of United States of America.

The usage of historical analogies when talking about current events in Ukraine allows the Russian public opinion makers to use traumatic past to justify aggression in Ukraine. This kind of appealing to emotions ensures that the reports will affect the public’s minds and hearts at the largest possible extent. In the 2013 Russia Foreign Policy Concept it is even underlined that one of the Russia’s foreign policy aims is to counteract “attempts to rewrite history using it to build confrontation and provoke revanchism in global politics and to revise the outcomes of World War II”. Needless to say that “attempts to rewrite history” is defined as historical knowledge which is opposite to that of Moscow’s. In practice this means incorporation of collective memory into publications that portray Ukrainian government as Kiev’s junta, Ukrainian army and its supporters as fascists and that questions the statehood of Ukraine. The communicative goal of such publications is to persuade readers about their belonging to the Russian culture and values, contrary to the Western liberal civilization standards. This is achieved by spreading the myth of Russia’s sphere of influence which intentions, according to Kremlin, stretch across the former Soviet Union.

## Conclusions

Although it can be concluded that the use of collective memory in order to create resonance with the current events in Ukraine can be identified, it is very complicated to indisputably assert that collective memory has been incorporated into news stories deliberately to achieve political goals, since there is a lack of theoretical foundations of information warfare concept on which such conclusions can be grounded. This is the direction in which it is necessary to continue to work.

Nevertheless, in its articles newspaper “Vesti Segodnya” is trying to create or reinterpret a past to justify aggressiveness in the present, for example, by comparing Ukrainian army with the nationalist movements from Second World War with whom Donbass rebels (not Russian soldiers as it is stated by the Russian language newspaper) are fighting. This example clearly demonstrates that in the Russian information operations great emphasis has been put on the interpretation of both historical facts and nowadays events. Critical discourse analysis of articles about Ukraine which were published in newspaper “Vesti Segodnya” clearly demonstrates how supporters of Kremlin politics and distributors of Russia’s official agenda use collective memory and historical analogies to create for themselves and the Russian authorities a favourable public opinion, which later can be transformed into a political asset for achieving socio-political goals, namely, to influence decision making process.

Traditionally, in the Russian information operations much attention has been devoted to psychological aspects. The current Russian information operations is no exception and today Russia has allocated a lot of money to implement information operations in the so-called cognitive dimension of information environment. This dimension encompasses the minds of those who transmit, receive, and respond to or act on information. As such, this dimension, according to information warfare theorists, constitutes the most important component of the information environment.

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